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U. S. Coast Guard Cuban Mass Emigration Operations Planning.

Does it meet the tenets of Operational Design?

by

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A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.



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## **ABSTRACT**

Does Coast Guard strategic level planning for Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Operations adequately meet the tenets of Operational Design proposed by the Naval War College?

A step by step comparison of the Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area strategic level Operations Plan (CAA OPLAN 9707-96) to the Operational Design Schematic promulgated by the Joint Military Operations Department of the Naval War College was conducted. This OPLAN is specifically written to provide strategic operational guidance to the tactical commander for a Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency if or when that occurs. Each heading or subheading in the analysis is taken from the Schematic. The analysis indicates whether the specific Operational Design tenet has been adequately or inadequately applied, describes the reasons why, and makes some recommendations for improvement. The analysis attempts to look at the Cuban Mass Emigration OPLAN from the perspective of a DOD reader who is charged with determining what role USN or USMC assets are to play if requested.

The OPLAN does a commendatory job parlaying tactical operational considerations to the subordinate Coast Guard commanders but is vague in its descriptions of national policy and strategic issues. It does not adequately convey long term aims, end states, centers of gravity, overall Coast Guard weaknesses or migrant strengths. Nor does the OPLAN adequately address how the Coast Guard expects to obtain the necessary forces for sustained high tempo operations. The lack of "big picture" guidance forces supporting DOD commands to fill in the blanks.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

The series of Joint Doctrine Pubs fails to include migrant interdiction operations as a Military Operation Other Than War (MOOTW) mission yet the Department of Defense (DOD) provided maritime forces in vital support of the Coast Guard's 1980 and 1994 Cuban mass alien migration operations. During the latter operation, known as "Able Vigil", the Navy provided over 16 ships to augment the six week Coast Guard interdiction mission, and over 300 Marines were trained and deployed to bolster ship-board security forces tasked to handle the 32,000 migrants.

A supporting DOD command needs adequate background information and clear strategic guidance in order to determine its supporting role in a mass migration operation. Thus, the Coast Guard should take a close look at its operations planning doctrine with the idea of melding in additional Joint Service Community design elements. The Naval War College offers an excellent schematic of key Operational Design tenets that should be considered by Coast Guard planning staffs. Does Coast Guard strategic level planning for Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Operations adequately meet the design tenets proposed by the Naval War College?

A step by step comparison of the Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area (CAA) strategic level Operations Plan (OPLAN 9707-96) to the Operational Design Schematic promulgated by the Joint Military Operations Department of the Naval War College will be conducted. This OPLAN is specifically written to provide strategic operational guidance to the tactical commander for a Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency if or when that occurs. Each heading or subheading in the analysis will address a key design tenet listed in the Schematic. Examples of the design tenets include: desired end state, center

of gravity, critical weaknesses, operational reserve, and cooperation. The analysis will indicate whether the specific Operational Design tenet has been adequately or inadequately applied, describes the reasons why, and make some recommendations for improvement.

The analysis will be conducted to determine how to improve Coast Guard joint planning doctrine, specifically for mass migration emergencies. The analysis is not meant to be a criticism of a proven Coast Guard OPLAN which is primarily intended for Coast Guard subordinate commanders who have a fairly broad understanding of migration issues. Rather it is an attempt to point out the OPLAN's shortcomings that if corrected will make it a better tool for supporting DOD commands including Commander in Chief (CINC), U.S. Atlantic Command (USACOM); CINC, U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM); CINC, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Commander, U.S. Marine Forces Atlantic; and the Navy's Western Hemisphere Group.

Commander, Coast Guard Atlantic Area is one of two theater strategic level operational commanders who reports to the Coast Guard Commandant for policy direction. CAA has responsibility for operations in the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Mexico, the United States east of the Rocky Mountains, Europe and much of Africa. CAA is at the CINC level of command and works closely with CINCUSACOM and CINCSOUTHCOM. As the primary maritime Federal law enforcement agency, the job of enforcing United States immigration laws and related international agreements at sea rests with the Coast Guard. Commander, Atlantic Area thus has the responsibility for creating and maintaining plans to conduct mass migrant operations, when needed, in his area of responsibility. The immediate subordinate commander for Cuban maritime interdiction operations is Commander, Coast Guard District Seven, Miami (CCGD7). CCGD7 is at the Joint Task Force level of command. His immediate subordinate for at sea migrant interdiction is an afloat "Commander Task Unit".

ANALYSIS: (comparison of OPLAN 9707-96 and the Operational Design Schematic)

Guidance

Aims (definition of victory) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* There appears to be no attempt to describe national policy, desired end state, or commander's vision. This should be up front, easy to find, clear and succinct. The Mission paragraph of the OPLAN describes only in very general terms the intermediate aim: "In a mass emigration emergency Coast Guard forces will conduct directed search and rescue, interdiction, deterrence operations, and possibly vessel movement control in *furtherance of national objectives*".<sup>1</sup> It is important for those not attuned to previous mass migrations that, as in all MOOTW, "political considerations permeate all levels".<sup>2</sup> A core for a long term aim could be borrowed from CAA's OP Order AMBER VALUE (designed to address illegal migration by Chinese) which contains the statement "it is United States Government Policy to challenge illegal immigration at all stages. Commander, Atlantic Area is responsible for high seas interdiction of illegal migrants within his AOR".<sup>3</sup> Specific short term aims are adequately addressed throughout the OPLAN particularly in the Operations Annex and are described as tasks. For example - "Interdict vessels transiting the Caribbean directly or via foreign countries for the purpose of illegally transporting aliens to the United States".<sup>4</sup>

Resources (Forces) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* Forces available to conduct the operation are not adequately described. There is a good description in the Operations annex of the level of ships needed per level of migrants heading for the United States. A concern not made apparent to DOD readers is that the Coast Guard can dedicate perhaps a dozen large cutters and approximately 20 patrol boats, but not for

more than a one to two months of sustained operations. Although it is made clear that CAA will go to CINCUSACOM for Navy assets, it does not indicate how many, what type, or for how long the Navy can provide those assets. There is absolutely no indication that CAA will go to Commandant, Coast Guard to request resources be sent from the other Area Commander, Commander Pacific Area, who controls over a dozen large cutters. A portion of these cutters could be a much needed operational reserve for greatly sustained heavy migrant flow associated with a major political upheaval in Cuba.

Restraints (prohibitions/restrictions - what can't be done) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The Rules of Engagement and the Use of Force Policy are very clearly described. Other operational restrictions have historically been applied but are not described. Stopping and boarding Cuban merchant vessels is prohibited (the United States cannot approach Cuba to request permission to board). Entry into Cuban or Bahamian territorial seas (Cay Sal Bank islands lie between Cuba and Florida) is prohibited without express permission or under Right of Assistance Entry. This restricted entry into foreign waters complicates matters when Coast Guard forces attempt to stop private American migrant smuggling vessels. Aircraft entry into Cuban military aircraft operating areas ("MUDS"), which extend well beyond Cuban territorial air space, is restricted for safety reasons. There is no mention of these Cuban "MUDS" in the OPLAN although it is a frequent concern for CCGD7 (who does not address it in his own OPORDER).

Constraints (obligation of certain actions) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* In this design category the OPLAN seems to be very thorough. There are so many legal and humane conditions that apply to this humanitarian related law enforcement operation, that Coast Guard forces must be cognizant of the particulars. Constraints are listed quite clearly and should provide good guidance for all participating DOD units. Examples:

operational forces will be required to surge to the OPAREA; reserve support will be minimal without involuntary call up; forces must check arriving United States documented smuggling vessels to detect safety or other violations of United States law; secure voice communications must be used due the Cuban ability to monitor all circuits; field units must identify smuggling vessel masters and crew; the airspace around NAS Key West is reserved for military exercises and deconfliction to conduct migrant operations in that vicinity is required.

Objectives (ultimate military objective) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:*

Although no political objectives are described in detail (other than to carry out "National Policy"), short term operational objectives are made quite clear in the OPLAN and its Operations Annex. Tactical success is gained by the safe rescue and prevention of Cubans from reaching the United States by sea illegally.

Desired End State (political, humanitarian) *Inadequate application of the Op Design*

*tenet:* The political end state is poorly developed as mentioned in the prior paragraph regarding long term aims. The humanitarian end state is addressed only in the simplest terms of migrant individual care, not with regard to the mass migration population in general. Buried in the OPLAN is the task - "The Coast Guard shall conduct operations in the Straits of Florida and along the Florida coast to rescue Cubans in distress, stop Cubans from illegally reaching the United States and deter private American vessels from proceeding to Cuba to pick up Cubans".<sup>5</sup> The OPLAN does not contain a reference to an overarching goal, a national policy, or an end state such as stability in Cuba or stability in the streets of Miami. It merely directs CCGD7 to "conduct interdiction in furtherance of national objectives".<sup>6</sup> CAA should seek guidance and craft a description of an end state such as help deter Castro from releasing migrants, or help create a climate in Cuba where



the populace will attempt economic improvement vice risking their lives on the high seas, or help encourage residents to cease their habit of retrieving migrants from Cuba. The latter is a habit South Floridians developed during the Mariel "Boat Lift" of 1980.<sup>7</sup>

**Enemy's Critical Factors** (migrant effort strengths/weaknesses)

**Critical Strengths** *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN describes the potential violators as: "persons who smuggle, or attempt or conspire to smuggle Cuban nationals into the United States".<sup>8</sup> Nothing in the OPLAN or subordinate OPORDER describes the type of conveyance used, routes taken, or tactics employed by migrants in an attempt to reach America (whether the migrant seeks rescue by or to evade Coast Guard forces). Some critical factors that help migrant efforts are: ability to evade radar (vessels are generally wooden or rubber vessels less than 20 feet); ability to avoid visual detection (vessels have poor navigational lighting, are dark in color, and lay low in the water); and migrants may often attempt to transit the Bahamian Cay Sal Bank islands to rest or hide prior to heading for Florida. Another critical opposition strength is any adverse weather which may impede Coast Guard forces (if migrants die or can't be found, the mission is not successful). There is no mention in the OPLAN of the potentiality of Cuban Navy or Border Guard vessels to stray out of Cuba's territorial seas to protect its sovereignty. Coast Guard units generally know of this possibility (I've had four encounters, two at night) but a US Navy asset not exposed to close encounters with the Cuban forces should be made more aware of the potential for an incident. Joint Pub 3-07 regarding MOOTW emphasizes - "of particular importance in the planning process is the development of a clear definition, understanding, and appreciation for all potential threats".<sup>9</sup>

Center of Gravity (COG) (hub of power and movement) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* There is no mention of a migrant or Coast Guard center of gravity in the OPLAN. The OPLAN seems to deem the COG to be the Cuban rafters actually at sea attempting the voyage from Cuba to Florida. Those rafters have historically represented the preponderance of those whom the OPLAN targets. The OPLAN also concentrates greatly on the stopping of American vessels heading south illegally in an attempt to circumvent United States law to retrieve migrants from Cuba or rafts. The OPLAN also seems to consider this group to be a COG without calling it so. Controlling migrants at sea and American private vessels are decisive points but not COGs. It appears the actual political and strategic COG is the will of the vast body of desperate Cuban nationals who desire to migrate to America without waiting for the legal or political process. The will of this vast segment of the Cuban population is the hub of all power in the migration movement. If United States efforts decisively choke off the flow of migrants departing Cuba by vessel and prevent American boaters from heading south to retrieve Cubans, then the will to migrate using traditional at sea methods could be broken.

Critical Weaknesses (vulnerability to attack) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* There is no description in the OPLAN of migrant or American smuggling vessel vulnerabilities if they are attempting to evade Coast Guard forces. Migrant vessels generally can't avoid interdiction once detected due to lack of mobility. Generally, migrants will acquiesce to authority when encountered. American smuggling vessels heading south are small thus subject to pounding by the prevailing 15 knot winds and three to five foot seas, and cannot make their designed speed or endurance. Another vulnerability is the easy detection of migrant or American smuggling vessels in calm seas.

Direction/Axis (space extending from base of operations to objective) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* It's made obvious in the Operations Annex that the operational direction for this mission is the swath of ocean between the Southern Florida region through the Straits of Florida, the North Coast of Cuba and that the marshaling and supply point is the Coast Guard facility at Key West. The basic OPLAN however, is vague, referring to operations in the broad waters of District 7 (which are not described). The key mission paragraph does not mention whatsoever, the location of the operation. Surprisingly, the Basic OPLAN describes clearly that "operations may be conducted in the vicinity of the Bahamas, in particular, Cay Sal Bank".<sup>10</sup> Those details should be placed in the Operations Annex and the general location described in the Operations Annex should be included or moved to the opening paragraphs of the basic OPLAN.

Operational Idea (clearly related events to meet objectives)

Method of defeating opponent (contain illegal migration) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN describes the broad interdiction actions needed to stop the flow of inbound illegal migrants. Also described in detail are the methods of indirect action used to deter private American vessels from retrieving migrants from Cuba. There is a good description in the CCGD7 OPORDER, which should be annotated and included in the CAA OPLAN, of how many Coast Guard and Navy vessels are needed for interdiction. The number of assets required is based upon how many migrants are flowing toward Florida, but there is no description of what part each vessel will play.

Application of Forces and Assets (main effort) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* There is no indication as to what actions particular forces will carryout. There is no clear wording that says large cutters will conduct certain actions, small cutters will

conduct certain actions, or that Navy ships, Marines, or helicopters will conduct certain actions, etc. There is little description of where the local commander of a task unit will be located or what his duties will be. Most actions are described in the vernacular of "Coast Guard forces". Although many of these details belong in the tactical commander's OPOORDER or OP Tasking messages, a participating DOD command might have difficulty interpreting the force mix and responsibilities without historical knowledge and some description in the OPLAN.

Point of main attack (decisive point) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* It is broadly described in the OPLAN that operations will occur in the Straits of Florida between Cuba and the United States and that operations may occur in the Cay Sal Banks of the Bahamas. As this is a defensive operation, determination of a precise point of attack is not feasible. However, past experience and demographic and geographic factors in Cuba indicate that the region of the high seas north of Havana is the area which should receive the most focus of operational attention. This is not mentioned at all in the OPLAN and it would help to make it clear that early rescue of migrants near the primary departure zone in Cuba greatly reduces the risk of migrant casualties (an essential task).

Operational Maneuver (concentrate forces) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* It's made obvious throughout the OPLAN that forces will be sent to the Florida Straits in support of the Operational Commander. The OPLAN indicates that forces will concentrate in the Straits between Cuba and the United States, and the ports and harbors of South Florida. The is a defensive operation built upon exterior lines designed to envelop the flow from a concentrated area in Cuba to a rather broad geographic area.

Operational Deception (manipulate illegal migrant perceptions/expectations) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN does not describe a scheme to make the migrants believe the Coast Guard forces are doing anything but patrolling the Straits on watch for them. This is quite reasonable as there is no intent or plan to deceive the migrants or private American smuggling vessels. One possible course of action would be to exaggerate the number of interdiction forces the Coast Guard has on patrol in an attempt to manipulate the perceptions of migrants or American smuggling vessels preparing to depart. This has an opposite "magnet" effect if used against migrants in a scenario that has the Coast Guard bringing migrants to America (likely freedom) vice repatriation to Cuba (recent scenario). The exaggerated at sea capacity to handle a mass migration would have to be broadcast to an intelligent general public via an intelligent media both of which have some capacity to understand limited Coast Guard capabilities.

Operational Fire (direct/indirect/non-lethal fires) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* No direct fire as commonly described is planned. Non-lethal fire is deterrence by patrolling, or in the case of private American smuggling vessels, port closures in Florida. The direct application of law enforcement is made quite clear in the OPLAN, but it is also a non-lethal fire. The OPLAN could do a better job describing the most likely migrant departure areas at which non-lethal fires should be concentrated. The OPLAN does a good job focusing upon the indirect fire needed to deter the departure of private smuggling vessel from Florida ports. This indirect fire consists of pamphlets, posters, and radio, television, and newspaper warnings.

Protection of Own Center of Gravity (protect vulnerabilities) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The Coast Guard center of gravity is the total surface force available for Cuban migrant interdiction patrol. The Coast Guard alone has never had an adequate

number of cutters to conduct a non-stop major interdiction for a sustained period (over two months). The OPLAN admits that surging of forces takes time and that there are other high priority missions. The OPLAN states that CINCUSACOM has agreed to provide some Navy support however there is no indication of what level.<sup>11</sup> The vulnerabilities of the Coast Guard COG is at least three fold, any of which can cause the failure of the operation: a. If migrants and/or American smuggling vessels use the element of mass surprise before adequate Coast Guard forces can be surged to the Straits. b. If migrants continue to make significant mass migration attempts for a prolonged period. c. If a Cuban mass migration occurs simultaneously with a Haitian mass migration or other significant crises such a war. These vulnerabilities are not described in the OPLAN. In the event of a failure by the Coast Guard to control migration at sea, the OPLAN describes the fallback Immigration and Naturalization Service's plan (Distant Shore) which provides for shore-side interdiction of migrants. The higher level center of gravity is the political or legal will of the American people to control a Cuban migration.

Operational Sequencing (arrangement of events) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN describes the basic flow of forces and sequence of events. Described in detail is the Readiness phase, the Alert phase, and the Marshaling and Dispersal phase.<sup>12</sup> A good description of sequenced operations addresses the preventing of departures from Florida by American smuggling vessels: a. establish Regulated Navigation Areas. b. close portions of a port to outbound traffic. c. prohibit certain vessels from moving.<sup>13</sup> The OPLAN allows flexibility to change the order of sequencing for maximum flexibility. The OPLAN also describes in detail the sequential actions to be taken by individual surface units upon detecting a migrant vessel, details more appropriate for the CCGD7 OPORDER.

Operational Synchronization (arrangements of actions in time, space, purpose) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN describes in general terms the arrangement in time and space of air and surface operations. It also describes the probability that U.S. Customs Service, Navy, and Coast Guard aircraft will work simultaneously with each other and surface vessels to coordinate interdiction operations. The OPLAN describes that operations will occur simultaneously with repatriation or transfer operations and deterrence of American smuggling vessel departures.

Operational Phasing (shifts in emphasis) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* As described earlier under sequencing, the OPLAN provides for an orderly process of readiness, alert, marshaling, and dispersion if the situation allows. It also describes the possibility that transfer of migrants to the United States or another "safe haven", or repatriation to Cuba could be phased or combined with ongoing interdiction operations.

Operational Pause (regenerate effort) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN describes that sustained migration attempts will continue based upon political situations in both the United States and Cuba. There is no provision for a built in significant pause nor does the nature of a mass migration allow for one. However, severe weather, including hurricanes, frequently will stop migrant attempts. It's a Coast Guard given that when weather delays to migration occur, many surface forces depart their active patrol areas for recuperation. It might be of help for potential Navy forces if the OPLAN mentioned that substantial weather delays will generally allow its surface forces to seek short term maintenance and rest.

Operational Tempo/momentum (pace/initiative) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN recognizes that forces must be surged to respond to a sudden mass

migration and that Navy and other Coast Guard forces will be required to obtain and maintain the initiative. However, the OPLAN does not clearly describe that the Coast Guard will initially not have the operational agility to react faster than migrants or smuggling vessels, it merely mentions the Coast Guard must surge. Nor does it describe how it will receive adequate support from the Navy or the other major Coast Guard Area Commander (Commander Pacific Area) to maintain a high operational tempo.

Branches and Sequels (built-in options/subsequent actions) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN clearly describes the branches or sequels of operations to include the stopping of American smuggling vessels heading to Cuba to retrieve migrants, the transfer of migrants to the United States or safe havens, or repatriation of migrants to Cuba. These sequels are basically State Department initiatives based on a variety of political situations and are not always left to Coast Guard decision makers.

Regeneration of Combat Power (phasing/pauses) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The OPLAN provides for the surge of an unknown number of assets to support the Operational Commander, the establishment of a Forward Operating Base at Key West, the provision to bring in voluntary reserves, and the utilization of some unknown level of Navy assets. The OPLAN describes that "CAA will monitor needs, and employment of high seas assets and schedule rotation in conjunction with concurrent operational needs".<sup>14</sup> However, not well described in the OPLAN is the basic truth that the Coast Guard and the Navy have only so many assets available and that in past sustained mass migrant operations, Coast Guard vessels and crews were "run into the ground" requiring many months to regain proper maintenance and employment levels.



Operational Reserve (redeployment) *Inadequate application of the Op Design tenet:* But understandable. The Coast Guard throws most everything it can into the mass migration operations to the detriment of other missions or maintenance. The OPLAN merely mentions that an unknown number of Coast Guard and Navy forces will be sent to sustain operations. It does not describe an Operational Reserve of such size and force to have a decisive impact of the operation. The Coast Guard Reserve has no aircraft or ships assigned. It would be a significant plus for sustainability and ability to hold forces in abeyance for a decisive impact if CAA would convince the Coast Guard Commandant to designate up front that Commander Pacific Area forces are an operational reserve (even though it would take them weeks to get to the Op Area).

Operational Sustainment (balance of consumption and logistical support) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The Logistics and Personnel annexes are very detailed and clear. The process of resupply and maintenance support is well proven from past experience. The OPLAN and logistics appendix very clearly state the personnel, maintenance, supplies, Forward Operating Bases, and other support needed to maintain high tempo operations. Resupply of vessels is conducted at American ports thus normal stateside logistics deliveries are utilized. An example of a more difficult operation in terms of logistics is a Haitian mass migration operation, which must be staged out of Guantanamo Bay.

Coordination (harmonize political and military objectives) *Adequate application of the Op Design tenet:* The basic OPLAN and the Operations annex very thoroughly describe the Coast Guard/Customs Service /Immigration and Naturalization Service interactions whether the Coast Guard or INS has the operational lead. A very detailed Public Affairs annex describes Coast Guard and media coordination. What is not addressed is the

coordination of Coast Guard forces with civilian vessels and aircraft (such as the "Brothers to the Rescue" aircraft recently downed by Cuban MIGS) assisting in migrant rescues. The civilian coordination and interface should be mentioned in the OPLAN so participating DOD assets can be made aware of the potential for operating with them. Civilians expect Coast Guard forces to react quickly to their migrant sightings, bring media scrutiny, and use non-secure communications. Civilian aircraft will be low-flyers using loose flight plans, and civilian boaters will be difficult to track (and often become search and rescue cases). Civilian aircraft and boats may also prompt responses by the Cuban military. The Coast Guard has a history of positive interaction with the Cuban Border Guards with respect to search and rescue, counterdrug law enforcement, and the return of hijacked Cuban government vessels. This Coast Guard - Cuban interaction should be briefly mentioned in the OPLAN for the benefit of DOD participants.

### **CONCLUSION**

The analysis indicates that the OPLAN is best suited for subordinate Coast Guard commanders who have a background (most do) in Mass Alien Migration Interdiction Operations because they can fill in the blanks from extensive experience. It's apparent that supporting DOD commands may struggle to fully comprehend many of the policy level and strategic particulars if they rely solely upon this OPLAN for guidance. The MOOTW Joint Pub (JP 3-07) states "All military personnel should understand the political objective and the potential impact of inappropriate actions. Commanders should remain aware of changes not only in the operational situation, but also of changes in political objectives that may warrant a change in military operations."<sup>15</sup>

There is no mention of a center of gravity, or similar terms, that describes the hub of Coast Guard or migrant strength. The determination of an American center of gravity

would help the Coast Guard focus on vulnerabilities, particularly its lack of sustainment assets. Emphasis upon an appropriate migrant center of gravity would perhaps turn the attention of American efforts to the root reasons for migration, not just the tactical issue of interdicting migrants at sea. There is not an adequate description of the opposition or its vulnerabilities. There are regional concerns that are not described, such as the presence of Cuban government forces and the need to work with American civilians.

The OPLAN works well for the preponderance of Coast Guard forces due to recent operational experience gained by many. This may not be the case as time goes by and Cuban mass migration fades from memory. Many say that political turmoil within the Castro government, with a resulting mass migration, is inevitable - it's simply a matter of when. Thus, it's best that the OPLAN, which is updated on a yearly basis, incorporates recent broad long term aims and better describes the overarching strategic concerns. Improvements in strategic and political guidance which follow many or all of the Operational Design tenets, should make this and similar Coast Guard OPLANs valuable tools for policy and strategy makers and supporting Coast Guard and DOD commands.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Plan, CAA COGARD 9707-96 (Portsmouth VA: 1996), 3.

<sup>2</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington: 1995), I-1.

<sup>3</sup> Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area, Operation Amber Value, CAA COGARD NR 05-96 (Portsmouth, VA: 1996), 1-2.

<sup>4</sup> Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Plan, CAA COGARD 9707-96 (Portsmouth VA: 1996), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., C-2-1.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup> Alex Larzelere, The 1980 Cuban Boatlift (Washington: National Defense University 1988), 295-326.

<sup>8</sup> Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Plan, CAA COGARD 9707-96 (Portsmouth VA: 1996), 1.

<sup>9</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington: 1995), ix.

<sup>10</sup> Commander Coast Guard Atlantic Area. Cuban Mass Emigration Emergency Plan, CAA COGARD 9707-96 (Portsmouth VA: 1996), 3.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., C-5.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., C-6.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>15</sup> Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Doctrine for Military Operations Other Than War, Joint Pub 3-07 (Washington: 1995), vii.

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